







220

Relationship of State, Regional, Local Transportation Planning

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Key to Icons

-  Memorandum of Understanding.
-  Reference document, such as a manual, book, or published article.
-  Permit or application for a permit, approval or certification.
-  Web site.*

220.01 Introduction

This section describes transportation planning activities at different levels of government, and WSDOT's role in working with metropolitan and regional planning organizations and local governments responsible for transportation planning.

220.02 Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs)

In Washington, metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) are established as required by federal statutes (23 U.S.C. 134 and 49 U.S.C. 1607). Each urbanized area (population 50,000 or more) must have such an organization to receive federal transportation capital or operating assistance. The purpose of such an organization is to provide a forum for cooperative trans-

portation decision-making by the local governmental units in the area and the state. The products of this continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation process are plans and programs consistent with the comprehensively planned development of the urban area.

Each MPO has a transportation policy committee consisting of elected officials of the general purpose local governments (counties and cities) within the area and may have a technical committee composed of personnel from public works and planning agencies within the area. WSDOT is represented on the policy and technical committees concerning transportation in each MPO.

The MPO is required to prepare a work program each year that describes the transportation and transportation-related activities the organization plans to undertake. Funds to prepare these plans and studies are derived primarily from federal funds (more than 80 percent) with the remainder from local funds.

The products of this urban planning process are:

- Transportation plan for the area describing policies, strategies, and facilities or changes in facilities.
- A transportation improvement program (TIP) that is usually a six-year program of projects including an annual or biennial element.
- The annual or biennial element consists of a list of transportation improvement projects proposed for implementation during the first one or two years of the TIP.

220.03 Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs)

Regional transportation plans (also known as metropolitan transportation plans in eight urbanized areas for federal purposes), are

* Web sites and navigation referenced in this section are subject to change. For the most current links, please refer to the online version of the EPM, available through the EAO home page: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/eesc/environmental/>

developed by Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs). An RTPO is created through the voluntary association of local governments within a region. Member jurisdictions within an RTPO determine their own structures to ensure equitable representation among local governments and to allow flexibility across the state.

The *RTPO Transportation Planning Guidebook* and other information is available on line from WSDOT's web site:

 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/>

Click on Site Index, then T, then Transportation Planning Office, then RTPO **Planning Guidebook**.

Or by direct link:

 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ppsc/planning/rtpo.pdf>

RTPO Membership and Designation – Membership in each RTPO must include a minimum of one county, and a population of at least 100,000. Regions may be formed in areas with less than 100,000 population if a minimum of three geographically contiguous counties are linked. Member jurisdictions of an RTPO must include all counties in the region, and at least 60 percent of the cities and towns representing at least 75 percent of the population of the cities and towns, as well as tribal governments and school districts.

In areas where there are Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) as required by the federal government, the RTPO and MPO must be the same organization. The Department of Transportation verifies the designation of each RTPO to ensure that all state requirements are met.

Each RTPO must establish a Transportation Policy Board whose membership includes, but is not limited to: representatives from the member counties, cities and towns; major employers; the WSDOT; transit providers; and port districts within the region. Technical Advisory Committees are encouraged in RTPOs.

Lead Planning Agency – The RTPO is required to designate a lead planning agency which may be a regional council, county, city, town agency, or a WSDOT regional office. Of the 14 RTPOs that have formed or are in the process of forming, eight of the lead planning agencies are regional councils, two are economic development councils/districts, three are Department of Transportation regional offices, and one is a county public works department. The key role of the lead planning agency is to provide staff support to the RTPO and to coordinate the development of the Regional Transportation Plan.

Developing the Regional Transportation Plan – The RTPO is a formal mechanism used by local governments and the State to coordinate the planning of regional transportation facilities and services. A key function of the RTPO is to develop a Regional Transportation Strategy which addresses alternative transportation modes, and transportation demand management in regional corridors, and recommended preferred transportation policies to implement growth strategies. The Regional Transportation Strategy serves as a guide – along with countywide planning policies, guidelines and principles – for the development of the Regional Transportation Plan, also a responsibility of the RTPO. RTPOs are also required to develop, regional transportation improvement programs based on the plan, in cooperation with WSDOT, public transit operators, local jurisdictions, and tribal governments. Improvement programs are to propose regionally significant transportation projects and programs and transportation demand management measures.

220.04 Local Government

Local Comprehensive Plans, under the State's Growth Management Act, serve as basic building blocks for transportation planning by defining land uses and the transportation system needed to support those land uses. Local comprehensive plans must include six elements as stated earlier. The transportation element of the plan should

integrate land use assumptions through identifying and developing the following:

- An inventory of land, water and air transportation facilities
- Analysis of impacts on other jurisdictions, and a feedback loop to reassess land uses that cannot be served with available funding; Service level standards
- Current and future transportation needs
- Realistic funding analysis

Other key components are plans developed by special transportation districts, such as transit agencies and port districts. These plans define the needs and services to carry out these special purpose governments' missions.

The County Road Administration Board (CRAB) helps county governments meet their transportation planning responsibilities through direct technical support, research on current issues with framework plans, workshops, and discussion papers.

(1) Highways and Local Programs

Highways and Local Programs (H&LP) is the division within WSDOT which serves local agencies. H&LP administers the distribution of federal funds to local agencies for FHWA. H&LP oversees 14 federal funding programs. Its responsibilities include recommending program levels, developing project priorities, preparing program, authorizing and monitoring projects, and performing federally delegated oversight on environmental, design, and construction activities on all federally funded local agency projects across the state.

(2) Planning Requirements

At the state and federal levels, policies and procedures have been established to provide for areawide coordination of transportation programs.

TEA-21 requires a continuous transportation planning process that involves:

- Transportation Management Areas (TMA) long-range transportation plans
- MPO long-range transportation plans
- Statewide long-range transportation plans
- Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) (see [Section 310.04](#)).

(3) Urban Program

The Transportation Improvement Board (TIB) and Transportation Improvement Account (TIA) were established by the 1988 legislature. (They were formerly called the Urban Arterial Board and Urban Arterial Program.) They are designed to provide additional revenues for use in urban areas and to ensure that these revenues are allocated and expended throughout the state in a logical and systematic manner.

The TIB is directed by the legislation to allocate revenues from the Urban Arterial Trust Account and the Transportation Improvement Account to counties and cities for use on specific urban arterial projects. To ensure that these allocations are systematic, orderly and productive, the TIB requires that systems of arterials shall be established for each city and county in urban areas in accordance with the federal functional classification system.

Functional classification is the process of designating and grouping streets into classes, or systems, each of which has a definably distinct function in serving different categories of traffic. The objective of functional classification is to define relative purposes of streets in providing service and influencing urban development, and to establish the most economic yet beneficial systems to meet street needs. The establishment and updating of such systems provides the TIB and the legislature with knowledge that revenues are spent on those streets that serve the major traffic demands in urban areas. Refer to the TIB's *Guidelines to Cities and Counties*.

(4) Rural Arterial Program

The Rural Arterial Program (RAP) was established by the legislature to help finance the

reconstruction of rural arterial roads, which faced severe deterioration in the wake of railroad abandonments. Arterials eligible for funding under the RAP are the county roads in rural areas classified as major collectors and minor collectors in the federal functional classification system.

The program is administered by the County Road Administration Board (CRAB), through a six-year construction program developed by county governments. The construction program is approved by CRAB and funded by the legislature through a biennial funding request. The program's initial funding of 0.33 cents of the Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax (MVFT) was increased to 0.58 cents by the 1990 legislature. That level of funding generates approximately \$37 million per biennium to the rural arterial trust account.

Since 1983, RAP has funded over 900 projects, most involving rehabilitation and reconstruction of existing roads and bridges to current and safer design standards.

(5) County Arterial Preservation Program (CAPP)

In 1990 the legislature created a second grant program, the County Arterial Preservation Program (CAPP), also administered by CRAB. Similar to WSDOT's Highway Preservation program, CAPP is designed to help counties preserve their existing paved arterial road networks. The program is funded with 0.45 cent of the fuel tax, which generates approximately \$26 million per biennium. For more information on the RAP and CAPP, see CRAB's web site:

 <http://www.crab.wa.gov/>

Click on Resources, then **CRAB Links**, then Grant Programs.

 <http://www.crab.wa.gov/grants/>

220.05 Exhibits

None.